

ARE CHRISTIANS
ETERNALLY
SECURE

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by

F. McCLEAVE

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ARE CHRISTIANS ETERNALLY SECURE?

THE gospel of God, as set forth in the Epistle to the Romans, provides salvation on terms which are within the reach of all men, namely, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. All who believe in Him are declared righteous, "being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 3:24). The word "redemption" here, signifies deliverance through the payment of a ransom. This ransom God has provided in His Son. On the ground of His atoning death, God can be "just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

Paul's gospel, as embodied in the Book of Romans, is vindicated in the Epistle to the Galatians, in which the apostle declares, "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:8). The words are repeated that his readers might know he had not uttered them in passion. He certifies that the gospel he had received is not after man, but was made known by revelation. It calls the believing sinner into the grace of Christ—a free, perfect, and eternal salvation, the gift of God to faith alone.

In view of the above, how solemn is the spread of Arminian teaching nowadays, which throws the sinner partly upon the work of Christ for sal-

vation, and partly upon his own resources. It denies the truth of the believer's eternal security, and insists that when a sinner receives Christ, the record of his sins is blotted out, but only up to the time of his conversion; from that time on, his salvation depends upon his faithfulness. Those who advocate such teaching have not, we feel certain, realized its serious implications. Not only does it reduce the sacrifice of the cross to the level of the sacrifices of the past dispensation, but it is utterly illogical, and probably springs from the strange idea of distinguishing between the believer's past and future sins. Were not all our sins in the future when Christ died? When Scripture declares that "Christ died for our sins," it means all our sins, does it not? If we have any sins which were not put away when Christ died, what possible hope can we have that they ever will be put away?

We do not claim that all who name the Name of Christ are saved and eternally secure; the Lord knoweth them that are His. We can only judge the reality of a man's Christian profession by his manner of life, and are not warranted in accepting the testimony of anyone professing to belong to Christ, if in works he denies Him. Joining a church, raising the hand for prayer, responding to a so-called altar call, shaking hands with the preacher, signing a decision card, etc., do not make people Christians. One may do all these, and have no sense of sin, or need of a Saviour. Men may identify themselves with the cause of Christ by a mere lip profession, or engage in works of charity, commendable enough in themselves, and remain un-

saved. It was to such people that our Lord gave the solemn warning of Matt. 7:21-23, "Not every one that sayeth unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven. Many will say unto Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy Name, and in Thy Name have cast out devils? and in Thy Name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity." Works, though many and wonderful, even when done in the Name of Christ and Christianity, can no more save men than their sins. Faith in Christ must precede works, if works are to have any value in His sight; otherwise such works are but dead works. On the other hand we do insist, and with Scriptural warrant, that once one has received the Lord Jesus Christ by a definite act of faith, having experienced new birth, that soul is not only safe but saved for eternity. In so saying we are contending for the position which the grace of God has given to all who obey the gospel. They are in present possession of eternal life, and shall never perish.

CHRIST'S PERFECT SACRIFICE

We base our belief in the eternal security of the child of God, first, on the perfection of Christ's atoning sacrifice. There is perhaps no clearer statement in the New Testament, of the standing which the believer has obtained through the work of the cross, than that which is set forth in the

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10th chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. In the first eighteen verses the writer contrasts the many sacrifices offered under the law, with the one all-sufficient sacrifice of Christ. The offerings presented upon Jewish altars could never make those on whose behalf they were offered, perfect, as far as their consciences were concerned; for if such offerings could have settled the sin question, they would not have been continued year after year. Even the annual sacrifice of the Day of Atonement, offered for Israel, far from putting away sin, called to mind the solemn fact that the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sins.

The infinite value of Christ's one offering is then considered. Inasmuch as the typical offerings could never give God full satisfaction, He had no pleasure in them. For this reason Christ came into the world to accomplish all that the Divine will required, saying, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God . . . by the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (vers. 5-10). Through the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ God's people are forever separated from their sins, and separated unto Himself. They stand perfected before God—not in themselves, the perfection is in Christ. He answered every Divine requirement, satisfying the demand of the law with respect to offerings which says, "It shall be perfect to be accepted" (Lev. 22:21). It should be clear to anyone that, inasmuch as the sacrifice which the Son of God offered on our behalf was perfect, God's acceptance of His offering guarantees the acceptance of the believer. More-

over, the perfection in which the believer now stands lasts as long as the value of the sacrifice, "for by one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified" (Heb. 10:14).

If the reader will glance at verses 1 and 2 of this chapter, he will see that to be perfected forever is to have no more conscience of sins. This expression defines the position of the believer in respect to his sins: he is eternally forgiven. As God had declared in verse 17, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." There is no statement in Scripture in which the eternal security of the believer is more positively and definitely stated than the above, from Hebrews 10. It is difficult to understand how any reader who has grasped the simple, yet forceful argument of the apostle in this chapter, can retain the slightest doubt of his complete and eternal acceptance in the person of Christ, his Substitute. So far as God and His people are concerned, all question of sin has been settled "once for all," and will be remembered no more.

NEW CREATION

The security of the believer may also be considered in the light of new creation. As raised from the dead, Christ became Head of an entirely new order of things, purposed before this time began. He is Head of the new creation as Adam is of the old. This twofold headship of Adam and Christ is set forth in Rom. 5:12-21, in which all men are seen as ranged under one or the other of the two heads. And so close is the connection between the person

and the race that all possess what their head has wrought. Adam who, in verse 14, is said to be a figure of Christ, is so because his work, in its effects, extended far beyond himself. Through his disobedience in Eden "sin entered into the world," involving his entire race in condemnation and death; for in Adam all sinned. The same principle applies to Christ, whose obedience unto death has secured justification and life for the many connected with Him as Head—that is, for all the saved. Whether a man is saved or lost depends on the race to which he belongs. If unconverted, he is linked up with Adam, and going down to eternal judgment because of the sentence of death pronounced upon the race, "for in Adam all die" (1 Cor. 15:22). But the same passage adds, "even so, in Christ shall all be made alive," meaning that all the redeemed have eternal life in union with their risen Lord who said, "Because I live, ye shall live also" (John 14:19).

When a sinner is converted he passes from the old creation into the new, and is destined to conformity to the likeness of Christ, the Head, or Firstborn of the new creation. "We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John 3:2). "Therefore if any man be in Christ he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God" (2 Cor. 5:17, 18). If in the new creation all that is of the old has passed away forever, once in Christ, through new birth, a man cannot lapse into his old position as a child of Adam's race. From the moment a man is saved his eternal destiny is

linked up with Christ, and he cannot be lost unless Christ fails. As this is impossible, all in Christ are eternally secure. In Him there is no condemnation (Rom. 8: 1), and no separation (Rom. 8: 38, 39).

THE MINISTRY OF THE SPIRIT

The believer's eternal security may be viewed in relation to the ministry of the Holy Spirit. We have seen that, by nature, all men are in Adam, in the sense that they have received life from him. The process by which a child of Adam receives life in Christ, and becomes a child of God, is clearly set forth in Scripture. In God's account the redemption of all that are in Christ was accomplished when Christ died upon the cross. The Divine purpose, however, could only become operative, in our case, through the work of the Spirit of God.

First, be it remembered, that no one would ever come to Christ unless he was drawn by the Holy Spirit. Nothing except the power of God can arrest the sinner in his downward course. This the Spirit does by rousing him to the awful reality of his lost condition, convicting of sin and judgment, and thus preparing him for the reception of the gospel message. This work of the Spirit is referred to in the following passage as the "sanctification of the Spirit." "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth; whereunto He called you

by our gospel to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. 2: 13, 14).

Notice that the salvation of the sinner is entirely the work of God. From eternity the Thessalonians were marked out for blessing, and were brought to repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ through the sanctifying influence of the Spirit of God. It is He who also produces the new birth, and gives to the believing sinner a place in the Body of Christ. And in process of time they, with all the redeemed, will be sharers of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Spirit of God not only translates the sinner from a state of nature into one of grace, but He never leaves him. We may grieve the Spirit by our unfaithfulness to Christ, but we cannot "grieve Him away" as so many think. We may quench the Spirit by indifference to the impulses He awakens in us to good works, but in the heart once opened to receive Christ, the Spirit abides forever (John 14: 16).

But there are further phases of the work of the Spirit in the children of God which give added testimony to their security in Christ. In Eph. 1: 13, 14, we read that, on believing the gospel, the child of God is sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, and that the sealing is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory. In this epistle is revealed the purpose of God to display the glory of His grace in those whom He has redeemed, throughout the ages to come. The inheritance of which the passage speaks is God's inheritance,

rather than ours, as Ephesians 1:18 shows—His purchased possession, redeemed through the blood of His Son (Eph. 1:7). The redemption of the inheritance by power will take place at the coming of the Lord. During the interval God has taken possession of His people by sealing them with the Holy Spirit, as it is stated again in Ephesians 4:30, “Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.” Believers are not sealed until they fail, but until the day of redemption, that is, the redemption of the body; then sin will be impossible. The sealing is God’s guarantee that the body of the believer will be fully conformed to the likeness of Christ’s body of glory in that day.

SAVED AND KEPT

Nothing has been said in these pages about the responsibility of those who hear and reject the gospel message. According to Scripture all such will be judged. Our object, however, is not to deal with the doom of the impenitent, but to seek to prove the security of the saved: to show that the salvation of mankind is the work of God from beginning to end. “He first loved us,” taking the initiative by means of redemption, for the recovery of the banished sons of men. But not only so, He manifested His best when we were at our worst, His love being enhanced by the fact that, “while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8). Thus the quality of Divine love was brought to light. It was absolutely disinterested; there was

nothing in us to attract Him but the reverse. We were ungodly and unrighteous—not only sinners, but His enemies. A dying French saint, embracing her daughter for the last time, said, “My child, I have loved you because of what you are; my heavenly Father to whom I go has loved me *malgré moi*,” i.e., in spite of myself (*Moule, Expositor's Bible*, p. 137).

We may conclude with the words of Romans 5:10, that if God can save His enemies, “much more” He can keep His friends. “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.” God can be trusted to save His people from the uttermost to the uttermost—that is, all the way through. It is unthinkable that He should fail to complete the work He begins in each saint at conversion. “Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Phil. 1:6).

EXPERIENCE AND GOD'S FAITHFULNESS

Experience bears testimony to the believer's security. Throughout the Bible there is contained a record of the lives of many of God's saints, whose sins are exposed and condemned, but there is not a single instance of one who was ever disowned because of his failure. None could question the faith of Abraham who, in Rom. 4:11, is referred to as the “father of all them that believe;” yet his lack of confidence in God's ability to provide for him,

and deceit regarding Sarah's proper relation to him are so disappointing. Without mentioning Lot's incestuous conduct, there is nothing in his life to show that he had faith, except that he was delivered, by the mercy of God, from the doomed city of Sodom. It is from the Apostle Peter we learn that he was a righteous man. What shall be said of David, whose sin in the matter of Uriah the Hittite caused the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme? It cannot be denied that David was a child of God. But the thing which David had done displeased the Lord, and was probably unconfessed for many months. Who has not rejoiced in the mercy of the Lord in sending Nathan the prophet to restore His wandering child to Himself? David confessed his sin and was assured of forgiveness. But though he was pardoned, he suffered under the governmental hand of God all the rest of his days.

Aaron led the people of God into idolatry, but he was afterwards consecrated high priest of Israel. Even Samson who, from the 16th chapter of the book of the Judges, seems to have been abandoned by the Lord because of his sins, is mentioned with David, Samuel and the prophets, and other worthies of the Old Testament dispensation "who, through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions" (Heb. 11:33). King Solomon loved the Lord, and walked in the statutes of David his father. And though he was richly blessed during a long reign, in his latter years his wives turned away his heart from the Lord, and led him into idolatry. No intelligent reader of Scripture would deny that Solo-

mon was a child of God. In the covenant of kingship, which God made with David, his father, He said, "I will be his Father, and he shall be My son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men . . . but My mercy shall not depart from him" (2 Sam. 7:14, 15).

The Lord warned Peter that he would deny Him, but he was assured of restoration through the Saviour's prayer, and commissioned to "strengthen his brethren." In view of Peter's failure who, among men, would have committed to his care the lambs and sheep of the flock of Christ? But the Chief Shepherd could see in Simon Peter those qualities of tenderness and firmness necessary in one chosen to lead and feed His flock; and perhaps he needed the lesson learned through the denial. Mark's lack of constancy was the cause of sharp contention between Barnabas and Paul, resulting in those two eminent servants of Christ parting one from the other. But some years afterwards Paul, writing Timothy from Rome said, "Take Mark and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry." The Lord had taken Mark up again, making him stable and profitable as a servant.

It is not our faith but God's faithfulness that has carried us through life's trials, and will preserve us to the end. Where is the believer who does not reflect with more or less sadness upon repeated failure during his Christian life? There is not one who does not sin in thought, if not in deed, many times a day. We have only to think of the countless evils arising from hearts within us, which are deceitful and desperately wicked, to appreciate the

words of Psalm 130:3, "If Thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?" How often we have failed to stand up under some trial or temptation, yet the Lord has never given us up. Were He to renounce His people because of their unfaithfulness few indeed would be saved. This is not to say that He looks upon failure in His saints with complacency; He corrects and chastises them, but He will never give them up. As David testified, "The Lord hath chastened me sore; but He hath not given me over unto death" (Ps. 118:18).

Every believer knows what it means to come under the chastening hand of God; but He is just as truly a child of God while feeling the smart of the rod, as when enjoying communion with Him. When a Christian sins, it affects his state—fellowship with the Father being interrupted until the sin is confessed—but his relationship remains unbroken. David, conscious that the Lord had withdrawn from him the light and joy of His presence because of his sin, cried out in anguish, "Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation" (Ps. 51:12). We cannot lose salvation, but we can lose the joy of salvation, which is a very different thing.

Dr. C. I. Scofield's remarks on Galatians 6:1 are most helpful. Speaking of the grace which restores the Christian who has been overtaken in a fault he says—"Your grace doctrine,' they say, 'tends toward looseness of life'—toward sin. . . . We answer that first of all the Scripture says that it is not grace but law which is the 'strength of sin' (1 Cor. 15:56; Rom. 7:8); and again that we know what the law says about sinners: 'The

soul that sinneth it shall die.' 'Moses said that such should be stoned.' But what does grace say? 'Ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness.' There is something just under the surface here which is very sweet. The word rendered 'restore' is a surgical term, and is used for resetting a dislocated limb. What happens when a believer sins? Is he cast out of the body? By no means; but he is dislocated as regards service and fellowship. If your arm is dislocated at the shoulder it no longer obeys your will. You may command it to pick up a book, but it hangs, inert, unresponsive. Furthermore, your arm is thoroughly uncomfortable—as we might say, unhappy. Use and blessing are suspended, but your arm is still a member of the body.

"Now this, we are told, is a very dangerous doctrine. Amazing statement! Because your arm is not lost, therefore you will be utterly careless about mere shoulder dislocations! I have been so foolish as to suppose that those whose limbs have suffered dislocation became exceedingly careless about such risks ever after. Ah, friends, the renewed heart which, through sin, has suffered the loss of communion with that heart's Beloved; which has learned in darkness the loss of the light and comfort and joy of His fellowship, ever after walks more softly with God" (*Galatians*, page 34, by C. I. Scofield).

Most of us know of someone who once confessed Christ, and for a time maintained a good testimony. But they have fallen back into a besetting sin and, seemingly, have lost all interest in the things of

God. If they were ever saved, they are saved today, and though their testimony be lost, we hope and pray for their restoration. He who can restore the years which the locusts have eaten, will bring them back to Himself. They must be left to Him. God has assumed full responsibility for the complete salvation of all who commit the keeping of their souls to Him. Were it otherwise, there would be no salvation for anyone. It is an "eternal salvation." Nothing else would suit us, or be worthy of God. The work is His from beginning to end, and all who put their trust in Him shall never perish, world without end. "I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever: nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it: and God doeth it that men should fear before Him" (Eccl. 3: 14).

We are aware of the claim that Judas Iscariot had been saved and was lost. Judas was never saved. Though called to the apostolate, Jesus knew from the beginning that he was a demon, and would betray Him (John 6: 64-71). Judas was admitted to the closest intimacy of the apostolic band, and companied with the Saviour for three-and-a-half years, and we suggest that, had he discovered a flaw in his Master's character he would have exposed it to His enemies. On the contrary, at the time of the crucifixion he was compelled, with other witnesses, to testify to Christ's innocency. It was probably for that very occasion and purpose that he was chosen.

Sin must always be abhorrent to God, whether in the lives of His people, or the unsaved, and must be judged. The sins of the believer were judged

at Calvary, and put away forever. When sin manifests itself in a Christian's life he is expected to take the same attitude towards it that God has taken, and unless he does, discipline in some form must inevitably result. "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged we are chastened of the Lord that we should not be condemned with the world" (1 Cor. 11: 31, 32).

It must be understood that every believer still has the old Adamic nature in him, called the "flesh" or "sin". "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1: 8). The flesh likes to sin, and will assert itself if not kept in subjection. It is the suppression of the flesh which causes the inner conflict described in Galatians 5: 7, "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." That is, we cannot live a life of holiness in our own strength. But the passage continues, "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh."

This is termed a "dangerous doctrine" by the opponents of the truth of eternal security, who claim, that to teach "once saved always saved" gives an excuse for sinning. It is noteworthy that Paul's doctrine of righteousness without works was similarly misinterpreted by unbelieving Jews, who slanderously reported the apostle as teaching, "Let us do evil, that good may come" (Rom. 3: 8). Is it not strange that some Christians should raise the same objection to the free grace by which we

are saved, and wherein we stand, as did the enemies of the gospel in Paul's day? A consistent godly walk is expected from all who profess faith in Christ, but a lifetime of fidelity to Christ and His cause adds nothing to our security. Believers are exhorted to be careful to maintain good works, because such a life glorifies God, making men intelligent as to His character and ways, and so is "good and profitable unto men." But to say that a man will be saved or lost according to his manner of life and conduct, is to abandon grace, and make a saviour of our good works. God incites His people to holy living, not by threatening them with the loss of salvation should they fall, or holding out the hope of conversion as often as they repent, but by reminding them of the dignity of their position, as associated with Him in Christ, and appealing to them to walk worthy of so high a calling.

CHRIST OUR ADVOCATE

But to consider Christian security from another angle: if, as the opponents of eternal security hold, when a believer fails he reverts to his old state of an unconverted sinner, needing to be saved all over again, to whom are such passages as 1 John 1:9 and 1 John 2:1 addressed? Clearly enough they are intended for believers who, because of failure, have forfeited fellowship with God. The latter passage says, "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." Mark you, it is not when we

repent, but when we sin, that the Advocate takes up our case. And in the face of the prosecuting attorney—Satan, the accuser of the brethren—He shows His wounds, and spreads His hands in intercession before the throne of God saying, “Father, that sin was taken into account at Calvary, and put away forever.”

But there is a further inference in the passage which is noteworthy. It does not say “when” any man sins, but “if” any man sin, showing that sin in a believer is considered as an irregular act. But the fact that provision is made for the child of God who falls into sin, repudiates the claim that sin separates from God. Not only so, the failing Christian is still addressed as a child, and God as his Father, which proves that what is affected is his fellowship with God and not his relationship to Him. The advocacy of Christ is seen as the means by which the work of restoration is effected.

In the following passage the responsibility of the erring child is indicated, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). These scriptures point the way back to communion for a child of God who fails, and not the way to forgiveness and salvation for a sinner. For a repentant sinner to recall the sins committed from childhood would be an impossibility. The one condition for salvation is repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We ask those who insist that sin will separate the believer from God; where is the line to be drawn? We are saved from the judgment due to

our sins, and though provision is made in the gospel for deliverance from sin's power, no Christian can truthfully claim to have been saved from sinning. From Scripture, as well as from personal experience, we know that, "in many things we offend all." If we forfeit salvation because of our sins, how can we know how far God will bear with our failures, and still continue to own us as His children? If our security depends upon living sinless lives, assurance of salvation is impossible; we could never know from one day to another where we stood.

It is to be feared that many Christians have a very imperfect sense of the extent to which we sin. It is seldom that our sins of omission give us much concern, the responsibilities we evade, the charity and courtesy which, at times, we deny to others. For "to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17). We sin without being conscious of doing so, darkening counsel by words without knowledge, like Job and his friends, and thus misrepresenting God. In Proverbs 24:9 we read, "The thought of foolishness is sin." In our prayers and service there is at times that which is sinful and irreverent in the sight of the Lord. How often, in public, prayer is made an occasion of preaching at, or admonishing others under the pretense of addressing God. Others, knowing that God has exalted the Saviour whom the world rejected and crucified, making Him "both Lord and Christ," pray in the Name of "Jesus," instead of giving Him His full title. We would not think of addressing titled persons in the same

familiar manner. These and many other such sins are classified in Scripture as "sins of ignorance" (Lev. 4: 2). In connection with the gifts which the children of Israel offered unto the Lord there was, as there is in our spiritual gifts of prayer and praise, much that was imperfect and unworthy of Him. This "iniquity of the holy things" Aaron, the high priest, was made to bear (Exod. 28: 38). Christ, our Great High Priest, has fulfilled the type by enduring the judgment due to us because of our sins of ignorance.

"God who knew them laid them on Him,
And, believing, thou art free."

The question is often asked, "If a Christian should die in a backslidden state, or in unconfessed sin, would such go to heaven?" It should be remembered that the eternal destiny of the Christian is settled when he believes the gospel, not after death. All believers are on common ground through redemption, which standing is not affected by their actions or state. Therefore should a Christian die while in a state of spiritual decline he would undoubtedly go to heaven. To deny this is to make his conduct his title to heaven instead of the blood of Christ.

In 1 Cor. 11: 30 we read of some whom the Lord had removed from the assembly at Corinth by death, neglect of self-discipline and self-judgment being the cause. These saints were fit for heaven but were unfit for earth, and so were removed out of the place of testimony. As a warning to the

rest of their brethren Paul says—and his words are as much for us as for them, “For if we would judge ourselves we should not be judged. But when we are judged we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world” (vers. 31, 32). God, as Father, chastises His children now, but if they will not be subject to His correction they must, sooner or later, come under His governmental hand. Whatever measures He may be pleased to use, however, in the discipline of His saints, their salvation is never involved for a moment.

As to a Christian who dies in unconfessed sin. It is doubtful if any have ever died who did not leave some sin or sins unconfessed. On this point, however, Scripture is clear, that any sin which the child of God does not deal with here, in this life, will be owned and confessed at the judgment seat of Christ. In this connection we refer the reader to the following passages, 2 Cor. 5: 10; 1 Cor. 3: 11-15; 4: 2-5.

SALVATION AND REWARD

Many, it would seem, fail to distinguish between salvation, which is a free gift, received immediately the sinner believes the gospel, and rewards, which are to be merited by believers for faithful service and testimony, and will not be received until Christ returns. “Behold, I come quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be” (Rev. 22: 12). It was as a servant, and in view of that day, that Paul said, “I keep

under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (1 Cor. 9:27). To claim from this passage that Paul had no positive assurance of salvation is contrary to reason. How could he who penned the Epistle to the Roman entertain any misgivings about his own security? It is well known to Bible students that the word "castaway" is the negative form of the word "approved." The apostle was most careful that, as a servant, he should not be disapproved in the day of manifestation and reward, and so kept the flesh in subjection. Elsewhere he says, "We labor, that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of Him" (2 Cor. 5:9). Every believer is accepted in Christ, the Beloved, but, as servants, all should endeavor to be accepted of Him in that day.

The parable of the pounds has been cited to prove that our salvation depends upon the use we make of our natural gifts and talents. The basic principle involved in the parable, found in Luke 19:12-27, is the responsibility connected with the use of spiritual gifts during our Lord's absence. The reader will observe that it was not the enemies of the nobleman who received the money, but his servants. Those who used what their master had committed to their trust, and for his advantage, were rewarded when he returned from the far country; while the slothful servant not only received no reward but forfeited the pound he had received in the first place. The parable has nothing to do with the way men are saved, but is intended to show that faithful stewardship on the part of

God's people now, will not be forgotten by Him when He returns to reign.

In 1 Cor. 3:11-15, a parallel line of truth is opened up. The unsaved are not in view in the passage; it is applicable only to those who believe in Christ, and build on Him as a foundation. The sins of every believer were judged at Calvary, but their service from the time of conversion will be reviewed at the judgment seat of Christ. "And the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is." That is, a thorough analysis and investigation of all service done in Christ's Name will be made by Him in order to determine its quality. Only that which He can approve will merit a reward; all else He will reject. "If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss (not of salvation but of reward), but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire" (ver. 15). Whatever value He may put upon the work of believers in that day, it will add nothing to their security. It is only in the value of the work of Christ that we have any standing in the presence of God.

The rewards which are promised to believers are symbolized by the various crowns mentioned in the New Testament. We repeat, rewards, which will be given in recognition of individual faithfulness, may be forfeited, whereas salvation is eternal because it depends upon the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and is all of grace. Christians are warned against subversive teaching; they are urged to continue in the things they have learned; they are exhorted to go on unto perfection, or full growth in Christian experience; they are cautioned against

losing their crown; but never are believers warned of the possibility of losing salvation. We challenge any reader to produce a single declaration of Scripture which even faintly hints that once a man has been truly saved, that man can fall away, and be lost.

THE TESTIMONY OF CHRIST

It has been said that wherever Scripture makes a positive, definite pronouncement regarding any vital doctrine, we may be certain we shall never discover anything anywhere else within the sacred volume which will nullify it. Our Lord's statements regarding the eternal security of the saved are among the strongest and most positive to be found anywhere in the New Testament. In John 3:16; 5:24, He has declared that all believers are in present possession of everlasting life, shall not perish, shall not come into condemnation, and have passed from death unto life. In John 10:27-29 He says, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. My Father which gave them Me is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand." These words can only be interpreted to mean that once a sinner has, through faith in Christ, become one of His flock, his eternal salvation is guaranteed by the power of God. Yet certain Arminian teachers have not hesitated to insert into the passage the qualifying clause, "they shall not perish as long

as they continue My sheep." To take such unwarrantable liberties with the words of Christ is a sin of no ordinary kind. It is adding to the Word of God. Our Lord did not say, I give unto them life, but whether it is eternal or not depends upon themselves. His words are, "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish." This single statement should settle the question of the eternal security of the saved for all who profess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The life which He gives to His own is not only eternal in its duration, it is Divine in its character, the life of God shared by all who believe in Him, and so cannot be forfeited or lost.

The sheep are His own. He calls them "My sheep." Others may be called and fitted to feed and care for the lambs and sheep of the flock, but the flock is His. Martin Luther is said to have had a servant named Elizabeth, who, in a fit of displeasure, left the family without giving any previous notice. Some time afterwards she became very sick. During her illness she requested a visit from Luther. Seating himself by her bedside he said, "Well, Elizabeth, what is the matter?" "I have given away my soul to Satan," she replied. "Elizabeth, listen to me," said Luther. "Suppose, while you lived in my house you had sold and transferred all my children to a stranger. Would the sale and transfer have been lawful and binding?" "Oh, no, for I had no right to do that." "Very well, you had still less right to give your soul to the Arch-Enemy; it no more belongs to you than my children do. It is the exclusive property of the Lord Jesus

Christ; He made it, and when lost He also redeemed it; it is His."

The following words, addressed to Israel, are as truly applicable to the individual Christian, "But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and He that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine" (Isa. 43:1). Though He borrowed many things, the only thing our Lord is said to have bought is the Church. We borrow the things for which we have but a transitory need. We purchase what we value, and wish to possess as our own. "Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it" (Eph. 5:25). "The Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood" (Acts 20:28). It is His beautiful flock. "As the Father knoweth Me, even so know I the Father, and I lay down My life for the sheep."

"Jesus is our Shepherd, for the sheep He bled;
Every lamb is sprinkled with the blood He shed:
Then on each He setteth His own secret sign;
They that have My Spirit, these, saith He, are Mine."

All His own are known to Him. "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them." "O Lord, Thou hast searched me, and known me," said David. "Nathanael saith unto Him, 'Whence knowest Thou me?'" "Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee," said Peter, after the Lord had restored His broken-hearted disciple to Himself. Yes, the Lord knows! The weaknesses, fears, and temptations of each one are understood perfectly by Him. And when we wander from His side He

goeth after that which is gone astray. So we are kept by the power of God, the security of each sheep being the responsibility and care of the "Shepherd and Bishop of our souls."

Undoubtedly the teaching of John 10:27-29 has been abused and misused by those who, having put away a good conscience, turn the grace of God into lasciviousness. But misuse of a doctrine does not in itself prove the doctrine to be wrong. Those who misinterpret the grace of God as giving license to live in sin have no knowledge of God. Those most deeply impressed by the marvel of Divine grace displayed in Christ, do not fail to realize their responsibility to walk in holiness. The truth of the believer's salvation and preservation through grace, far from having an immoral tendency, teaches us to live "soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world" (Titus 2:12).

It is often asked, "If the believer wills to sin how can he expect to be saved?" The answer of Scripture is, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for His seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (1 John 3:9). In the section in which these words are found the object of the apostle is to describe the characteristic differences between the children of God and the children of the devil; the former purify themselves, the latter are characterized by sin. The Divine nature which the child of God receives when born of the Spirit cannot sin; nor does it ever consent to sin. Failure in one born of God is due to the presence of a sinful nature which he has failed to keep in subjection, but no child of God can be char-

acterized by unrighteousness. D. L. Moody, describing the difference between the saved and unsaved, once said, "The unbeliever commits sin and excuses it; the Christian judges sin."

GOD'S PURPOSE AND PROVIDENCE

God's people were foreknown. Ere time began He fixed His regard on them, He noted them with favor. And this favorable regard is the commencement of the whole process of their redemption. "For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified, and whom He justified, them He also glorified" (Rom. 8: 29, 30). The words describing the stages which were necessary for the completion of the Divine purpose impress us, especially the last one, "glorified," because, though we have not yet realized this state, it appears in the past tense as if we were already with Christ in bodies like His own. But so do all the others, showing that He who calleth those things which be not, as though they were, saw His people so glorified in His Son before time began. Foreknowledge, predestination, calling, justification and glorification are five golden links in a chain which bind all believers to God's eternal purpose in Christ. The passage cited above, from the 8th of Romans, is the culminating point in Paul's argument, which is intended to prove that no circumstances of life, however adverse, can

hinder the purpose of God, which will be realized in due time. Nothing can rob believers of their eternal glory, for "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (Rom. 11: 29).

Not only so, we are assured that God's providence, as well as His purpose, works on our behalf. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8: 28). The expression "them that love God" does not refer to any special class within the family of God, but to all whom He calls according to the election of grace. The term "called" as used in the Gospels and Epistles has a very distinct difference. In the former it always means simply the invitation of God, but in the latter it invariably implies both the invitation and our acceptance of it.

"The passing days;
 The parting ways;
 The broken ties;
 The many sighs;
 The hopes and fears;
 The secret tears;
 The ups and downs;
 The smiles and frowns;
 These things, and other things;
 Everything and "all things;"
 Together work for good
 To them that love their God;
 To them He calls by grace;
 To them who seek His face.
 To such, love brings
 The best of things;
 Everything—"all things;"
 With Him, the Son,
 Divinely giv'n
 For us, undone.

So hope thou still in God;
Cleave, cleave fast to His Word;
 In weakness kneel,
 His power to feel,
And patient walk with God!"

"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. 4:17). Paul speaks of the burden of his afflictions as a minister of the gospel. Through them all he was sustained by the power of God, and by the hope of future glory. His present afflictions and distresses he deemed both light and momentary when compared with those abiding realities seen only by the eye of faith. The "things which are not seen" to mortal eyes are, immortality, the beatific vision—Christ in unveiled glory, with all those blessed certainties for which the saved are encouraged to hope. The power and comfort which sustained the apostle are the same which can support all the followers of Christ. Nowhere does the apostle entertain the slightest fear or uncertainty of reaching the goal before him; the presence of Christ in glory.

We have read the Bible over a long period of years and, not only have we failed to find anything to support the falling-away doctrine, but on the contrary, have been confirmed in the belief that nothing can sever the believer from Christ. In Romans 8:38, 39, every conceivable adversary is considered—the most extreme changes of condition, the most powerful beings in the universe, all the vicissitudes of life—present and to come—anything

within space and everything within the vast range of created things. Nothing can separate believers from the God who loves them. "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come. Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Can those who rest in simple faith upon this, and other equally assuring declarations of Scripture, be rightly charged with "conceited presumption," as they often are, for believing themselves eternally secure? Are not those rather conceited who believe it possible to lose their salvation, and who still continue to believe that they are saved?. They are in the conceited position of believing that they have met all the conditions they think are involved in their conditional salvation. If salvation were conditional, peace would be unknown, and the Christian life one prolonged state of mortal fear.

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